

## 10 Deliciously Guilt-Free Dining Out Makeover Tips

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Whether it's stay-cation, vacation, business trips or on-the-go, dining out is often the most convenient...and the most tempting when it comes to veering off-track from healthy-lifestyle eating. With a few easy tweaks to your menu perusing, you can creatively make choices to keep you feeling and being your best.



- 1- **Sip wisely!** Water, teas and even sparkling water provide better hydration, especially during the summer months, and can be transformed into freshness with lemon, lime, orange or even cucumber slices or berries. Sweet coffee treats, soft drinks or other “adult beverages” are usually full of empty calories that add up quickly. Pick smaller sizes to help avoid excesses of ‘liquid calories and OR choose unsweetened coffee and tea and fix it up with stevia or a few drops of honey. Tip: Ladies, stuff a few stevia packets or a travel-sized, flavored stevia bottle in your purse and share them with the others at the table.
- 2- **Think twice on the appetizers.** Skip the deep fried and rich, creamy dip choices, empty of nutrition. Lettuce wraps or other veggie plates make great starters. Or, request a fresh veggie plate to go alongside hummus or other dips, in place of (or to complement) chips, pitas and other fluffy calories.
- 3- **Build your own entrée.** Survey the menu for available items and request your own custom-designed salads, stir-

frys, entrées and sides. Wait staff love it when you call it the “ \_\_\_ SPECIAL.” (Fill in the blank with their name.) Besides, most chefs love the unique challenge; and it often comes out just a little fresher and better!



**4- Keep it “lite”.** Request your dressings and sauces on the side to reduce unnecessary fat intake. A little dab will do ya and go a long way to enhance flavor. Order “no” or “lite oil” for stir-frys, omelets, eggs, fajitas and many other fried foods, which can be cooked deliciously without being saturated.

5- **Add veggies!** Whether it's a pizza, sandwich or pasta dish, add some fresh veggies to get a nutrient and flavor boost. Steamed veggies make a great replacement for pasta, veggie pizzas are terrific (and beautiful), and wraps (either from leafy greens, a tortilla, or even "naked") can help reduce the 'fluff'.

6- **Skip the refills!** Keep the bread and chip baskets to one per visit (unless you're part of a large party). It's easy to mindlessly fill up on chips and bread before the meal even comes, especially if you're hungry.



7- **Make it 100% fruit.** If you're choosing a healthier smoothie, request only real fruit, not juice or a fruit juice concentrate that's processed into lower fiber, nutrients and higher sugar content...or loaded with other sugary fillers.

8- **Split a meal.** Whether you take half home for a second meal or share with a friend, it'll reduce your portion size to more normal amounts. America is known for supersizing!

9- **Monitor your trips.** Buffets, family-style dining and "never ending bowls" can be a set up for overeating. Set your limits beforehand. Start with green salads or other veggie dishes and finish off with sampler-sized portions of entrees, to keep portions reasonable.

10- **Just ask.** Whether you call ahead or when you sit down, make sure your waiter knows of any special food restrictions, allergies or sensitivities to head off any potential reactions, cross-contaminations or do-overs. If you know you have specific preferences, a few minutes of research or a couple of calls can make you and your party much happier. The demand for special requests, gluten free, vegetarian/vegan, plant-based options is exploding in need.

Get lost in your dining experience! Kick back, unwind, laugh and make memories...with those special people! And keep the food as an accent not the main feature to your time of fun and relaxation.



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